

While serving our country overseas as a cavalry scout in Operation Desert Storm, Jamie was involved in an accident that left him briefly paralyzed and now disabled, and wrestling with severe depression and PTSD. When he returned home, he would travel to the local VA for treatment where he was issued a cane to use that never held up. So, he decided to make his own out of repurposed Christmas trees.

An effort that started out as a necessity three years ago has now grown to a team of 60 volunteers who have made more than 220 canes. Jamie says crafting these canes is his true calling and they have brought him back from the brink of taking his own life—and he has changed the lives of those around him.

I want to honor Jamie today and thank him on behalf of the 25th District of Texas for his continued service to our nation. In God we trust.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JOEL
PACKER

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2020

Ms. DeLAURO. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of Joel Packer, a true hero for education and a dear friend.

Joel Packer is known across the education community as a champion for education funding. He spent more than 40 years advocating for students both in the public and private sector. Starting at the Student Association of the State University of New York, his career as an advocate grew with his work in D.C. at the National Education Association, and most recently, The Raben Group and the Committee for Education Funding (CEF) before his retirement in 2016.

Joel worked on critical issues like education funding, higher education, environmental hazards in schools, and civil rights. He was on the front lines of the push to improve testing in No Child Left Behind and was always there to remind us who we need to be prioritizing in the Congress: our children and their education. Joel championed the coalition of education advocates at CEF and masterfully represented the interests of a diverse group of educational institutions. Joel led the CEF's fight against education budget cuts in 2015, never giving up on his mission to ensure a genuine federal investment in our children's education. Throughout his career, Joel's dedication demonstrated the kind of intensity and willingness to collaborate necessary to win in the fight for education. Moreover, his passion for education and bettering the lives of all students was clear. Joel was an expert when it came to education policy and the Appropriations process; he knew, and helped all of us learn, how good ideas and good policies are not good enough—not without the necessary resources to make a difference.

I feel lucky to have known such a tremendous advocate for education in this country. Joel was many things—he was an amazing husband, a proud father and grandfather, an inspiring mentor and colleague, and an unwavering friend. Joel was taken from us too suddenly, and my deepest condolences go to his family. We will miss Joel and his bound-

less passion for fighting for what is right and for what our nation's children need most. Joel's values and mission will live on in those of us who remain in the fight, and we fight in his honor.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in remembering Joel Packer. He was a true champion for education and his leadership will never be forgotten.

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BAKU
POGROMS: REMEMBERING THE
VICTIMS

HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2020

Mr. McGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of the victims of pogroms against the Armenian population in then-Soviet Azerbaijan thirty years ago: These attacks against Armenian Christians happened between 1988 and 1990 in the cities of Sumgait (February 27 to 29, 1988), Kirovabad (November 21 to 27, 1988) and the city of Baku (January 13 to 29, 1990).

It is clear that the pogrom of Armenians in Baku was not a spontaneous and one-time event, but the culmination of a series of ethnic violence waged against Armenians. In 1988, the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh, an ethnic Armenian enclave forcibly separated from Armenia and incorporated into Soviet Azerbaijan, began to voice their demand for reunification with Armenia. Their peaceful protests were reinforced by the February 20, 1988 vote by the Soviet of People's Deputies in Karabakh requesting the transfer of the region to Armenia. These events were taking place in the context of Mikhail Gorbachev's Perestroika and Glasnost. Unfortunately, Moscow and Azerbaijani authorities rejected these calls and strong anti-Armenian sentiment was whipped up, including calls for the death and ouster of the Armenian population.

On February 27, 1988, a massive pogrom was carried out in Sumgait where the Armenian population was brutally slaughtered and expelled. The Sumgait pogrom was followed by a pogrom in Kirovabad, the second largest city in Azerbaijan, where all the Armenians were expelled. After these tragedies, a massive migration of Armenians from Azerbaijan began, along with the migration of approximately 200,000 Azerbaijanis and Muslim Kurds who exited Armenia. By 1989, Armenians remaining in Azerbaijan stayed only in those places where they had well-established communities, as in Baku.

In January 1990, a series of Azerbaijan political rallies took place, and on January 13th, a crowd of about 50,000 divided into groups and began raiding and invading Armenian homes, brutalizing the inhabitants, including women and children, and destroying and burning houses, businesses and other community structures. The rallying cry was to cleanse the city of Armenians. The violence, killings, rapes, beatings, looting and forcible expulsion of Armenians persisted between January 13th and 20th. It is still unknown the exact number of people killed, but estimates place the death toll around 450 people. Throughout it all, local militia and Soviet troops stood by as the violence escalated over a week's time. Not until

the evening of January 20th, after most of the Armenian population had fled or been expelled from Baku, did the Soviet Army intervene to stop the seven-day massacre.

Garry Kasparov was born in Baku in 1963. His mother was Armenian. In 1985, he became the youngest ever World Chess Champion. In January 1990, he was excelling in his competitions, and ranked as the No. 1 chess player in the world. Yet in January 1990, he bravely returned to Baku, into the midst of massacre and carnage, to rescue and evacuate the families of his friends and relatives. Describing those events, he has testified that:

"No one would halt the Armenian pogroms in Baku, although there were eleven thousand soldiers of internal troops in the city. No one would intervene until the ethnic cleansing was carried out. The pogroms were happening not in a random place, but in the huge capital city with blocks of flats. In such a megapolis as Baku, the crowd simply cannot carry out targeted operations like that. When the pogrom-makers go purposefully from one district to another, from one apartment to another, this means that they had been given the addresses and that they had a coordinator."

I don't mean to simplify the complex history and people of this region, but these pogroms set the stage for more than two decades of aggression by Azerbaijan against Armenians, during which Azerbaijan initiated and lost a war against Nagorno Karabakh. Azerbaijan's persecution of Armenians continues even today in attacks against Nagorno-Karabakh, now known as the Republic of Artsakh.

There has yet to be an independent investigation of the events that occurred between 1988 and 1990 that emptied Azerbaijan of its Armenian population. No one has been held accountable for the violence and the deaths. Azerbaijan remains in turmoil because of the fanaticism and thirst to ethnically cleanse the entire region of Armenian Christians.

The U.S. Congress forcefully spoke out during the period of 1988 to 1990 against these massacres and expulsions of Armenians by Azerbaijan. We have rejected the Azeri war against Nagorno Karabakh and stood in solidarity with the Armenian people of Artsakh. We will continue to do so.

Madam Speaker, today I remember all the victims and I honor all the survivors of these terrible acts of ethnic cleansing. May all the people of Armenia and Artsakh live in peace and freedom for which they have sacrificed and suffered so much.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. HARLEY ROUDA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2020

Mr. ROUDA. Madam Speaker, I missed votes on Tuesday, February 11, 2020 as I was traveling after attending a memorial service in my district. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows: Roll Call Vote No. 57 (On Ordering the Previous Question): YEA; Roll Call Vote No. 58 (On Agreeing to H. Res. 844): YEA; and Roll Call Vote No. 59 (On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass H.R. 1980, as Amended): YEA.